CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Cleanup Order Issued to Chrome Crankshaft

SACRAMENTO -- The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced issuance of an Imminent and Substantial Endangerment Order to Chrome Crankshaft, located at 6845 East Florence Place in Bell Gardens. The order requires the facility to conduct removal actions, complete a Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study and prepare and implement a Remedial Action Plan to address contaminated soils which have been identified at the site.

Hazardous substances which are present at the site include lead, nickel, cadmium, chromium, hexavalent chromium and mercury. The substances may represent a threat to human health through ingestion, inhalation, and dermal contact.

The order requires the facility to fence and post signs at the site within 30 days and immediately implement dust suppression measures to prevent offsite dust migration. In addition, the facility owners are required to meet with DTSC within 15 days to discuss a site remediation strategy. The discussion will include site risks and priorities, project planning, phasing and scheduling, remedial action objectives and the need for addition removal actions, including the control of the facility's air emissions. The order carries a potential penalty of $25,000 per day for noncompliance.

The two-acre facility, located adjacent to the Suva Elementary and Suva Intermediate Schools, has been in operation since 1963 and is in the business of chrome plating.

The order was issued as part of the Department's overall investigation into soil and air contaminants that could be impacting the adjacent Suva Schools. In a soil investigation conducted at the school grounds in September 1998, hexavalent chromium was detected in one soil sample (7.8 ppm) that was collected from an area near the elementary school sandbox.

In addition to the Department's findings, in October 1998 the Regional Water Quality Control Board also reported elevated levels of the following contaminants in surface soils at the Chrome Crankshaft site, (lead at 3,100 ppm, cadmium at 165 ppm, chromium at 3,450 ppm and hexavalent chrome at 478 ppm.) Also in October 1998, the facility reported a release of hazardous substances in a letter it sent to DTSC. The facility reported finding the following levels in surface soils: lead at 5,300 ppm, cadmium at 294 ppm, chromium at 1,510 ppm and nickel at 128 ppm.

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The contaminants are:

- Hexavalent Chromium - classified as a Class A carcinogen (a known human carcinogen) by the inhalation route. The State of California has determined under Proposition 65 that hexavalent chromium is a carcinogen by both the inhalation and oral routes.

- Lead - a suspected carcinogen of lungs and kidneys. The major organ systems affected are the nervous system, blood system and kidneys. Lead may also cause permanent brain damage, especially in young children.

- Cadmium - a probable human carcinogen. The State of California has determined under Proposition 65 that cadmium is a male reproductive and developmental toxicant. Exposure to cadmium could lead to respiratory conditions including bronchiolitis and emphysema.

- Nickel - categorized by as a known human carcinogen. Nickel is a respiratory irritant. Ingestion could cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

- Mercury - The State of California has determined under Proposition 65 that mercury and mercury compounds are developmental toxicants.

The DTSC is in the process of evaluating the levels of contaminants found at the facility and will establish appropriate cleanup levels in soils that are protective of public health and the environment.

DTSC is one of the six boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency.

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